

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

5 1. A sound muffling device comprising:
a body having a substantially closed end and a
substantially open end, wherein the substantially closed
end has at least one opening, and wherein the
substantially open end has a size and contour such that
10 the substantially open end is adapted to be placed over a
mouth of a user while engaging a face of the user to form
an effective sound seal around the mouth;

15 a sound wave guidance tube, wherein the sound wave
guidance tube has a first end connected to the
substantially closed end of the body, and wherein an
opening of the sound wave guidance tube and an opening in
the substantially closed end of the body are
substantially matched to allow sound waves to pass from
the body into the sound wave guidance tube; and

20 an adapter for connecting a second end of the sound
wave guidance tube to an exterior case of a portable
phone in close proximity to a microphone on the portable
phone.

25 2. The device of claim 1 further comprising:
an ear cover attached to the body, wherein the ear
cover extends to substantially cover an ear of the user
in order to muffle sound entering the ear.

30 3. The device of claim 1 wherein the adapter comprises
a suction cup for attaching the second end of the sound
wave guidance tube.

4. A sound muffling device comprising:

a body having a substantially closed end and a substantially open end, wherein the substantially closed end has at least one opening, and wherein the substantially open end has a size and contour such that the substantially open end is adapted to be placed over a mouth of a user while engaging a face of the user to form an effective sound seal around the mouth;

10 a microphone attached to the body, wherein the microphone generates an output electrical signal responsive to sound waves from a voice of the user;

15 an electrical conductor for carrying the generated output signal from the microphone; and

an adapter for connecting the electrical conductor to an electrical contact on a portable phone such that the microphone acts as an exterior microphone for the portable phone.

20 5. The device of claim 4 further comprising:

an ear cover attached to the body, wherein the ear cover extends to substantially cover an ear of the user in order to muffle sound entering the ear.

6. A method for using a distributed data processing system, the method comprising:

receiving a seat reservation for a passenger on a transport vehicle;

5 determining whether to reserve a sound muffling device for the passenger, wherein the sound muffling device is adapted to couple to a portable phone; and

in response to a positive determination to reserve a sound muffling device for the passenger, reserving a
10 sound muffling device for the passenger.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the sound muffling device has a body having a substantially closed end and a substantially open end, wherein the substantially closed end has at least one opening, and wherein the substantially open end has a size and contour such that the substantially open end is adapted to be placed over a mouth of a user while engaging a face of the user to form an effective sound seal around the mouth.

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20 8. The method of claim 6 further comprising:

charging the passenger a fee for use of the sound muffling device.

9. A system for using a distributed data processing system, the system comprising:

receiving means for receiving a seat reservation for a passenger on a transport vehicle;

5 determining means for determining whether to reserve a sound muffling device for the passenger, wherein the sound muffling device is adapted to couple to a portable phone; and

10 reserving means for reserving, in response to a positive determination to reserve a sound muffling device for the passenger, a sound muffling device for the passenger.

15 10. The system of claim 9 wherein the sound muffling device has a body having a substantially closed end and a substantially open end, wherein the substantially closed end has at least one opening, and wherein the substantially open end has a size and contour such that the substantially open end is adapted to be placed over a mouth of a user while engaging a face of the user to form 20 an effective sound seal around the mouth.

11. The system of claim 9 further comprising:

25 charging means for charging the passenger a fee for use of the sound muffling device.

12. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for use in a data processing system, the computer program product comprising:

5 instructions for receiving a seat reservation for a passenger on a transport vehicle;

 instructions for determining whether to reserve a sound muffling device for the passenger, wherein the sound muffling device is adapted to couple to a portable phone; and

10 instructions for reserving, in response to a positive determination to reserve a sound muffling device for the passenger, a sound muffling device for the passenger.

15 13. The computer program product of claim 12 wherein the sound muffling device has a body having a substantially closed end and a substantially open end, wherein the substantially closed end has at least one opening, and wherein the substantially open end has a size and contour such that the substantially open end is adapted to be placed over a mouth of a user while engaging a face of the user to form an effective sound seal around the mouth.

20 25 14. The computer program product of claim 12 further comprising:

 instructions for charging the passenger a fee for use of the sound muffling device.